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ABSTRACT

This conference presentation handout describes a program which uses dance therapy to integrate special education students with various disabilities. The 6-week program at a middle school involved having a professional dancer teach students traditional and modern dance methods as a means of expressing emotions, followed by teams of students choreographing and performing a dance. The program also involved biweekly guidance sessions to facilitate improved feelings of mutual respect, and creation of costumes by students. Individual sections of the handout packet cover: project introduction, project description, necessary resources, projected costs, goals and objectives, project management, student attitude questionnaire, time schedule, project options, publicity, project evaluation, teacher evaluation, and student evaluation. (DB)

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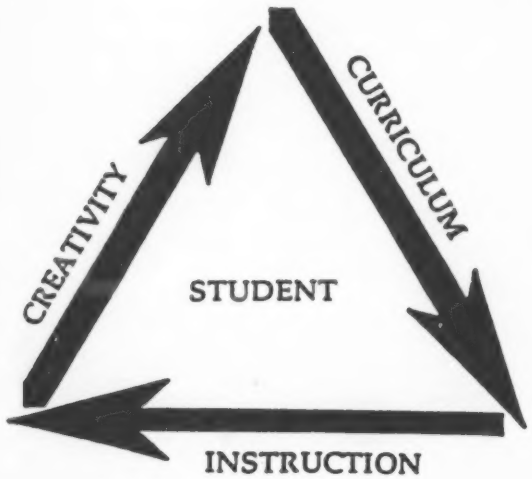
DISCOVER THE MAGIC

ED 395 423

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
NATIONAL CONVENTION
and
TWIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

present

THE MAGIC OF LEARNING THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE DANCE THERAPY PROGRAM



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USING DANCE TO INTEGRATE EXCEPTIONALITIES

Discover the magic of dance for your students. This presentation highlights an innovative program utilizing modern dance instruction and complementary guidance sessions for uniting children of several exceptionalities toward mutual respect and a common goal. Suggestions and resources toward developing a similar program are included.

All students, regardless of exceptionality, have special needs. By integrating students from various special education disciplines in a common environment and experience, attitudes, behavior, and self-control are positively affected. A dance therapy program conducted within the school setting effectively meets these needs.

Through the Art of Dance, the life qualities of discipline, dedication, perseverance and teamwork were highlighted and emphasized in a special program at Twin Valley Middle School. The program was made possible through a grant received from the Pennsylvania Arts in Special Education Council. For six weeks, a young professional taught traditional and modern dance methods as a means of expressing feelings and emotions. Once the students were familiar with dance movements, they worked as a team and chose an emotion to perform. The dance instructor helped the students choreograph a dance and select music appropriate for the emotion selected.

A second component to the program incorporated biweekly guidance sessions that included written and oral follow-up activities. The counselor facilitated improved feelings of mutual respect.

In a third facet, students designed and created their own costumes which reflected the emotion selected and the group's interests. The students wore the costumes during the final culminating activities: school-wide dance repertoire assemblies and a parent performance.

Students took pride in their efforts and in achieving goals such as: learning about dance, taking risks, developing friendships, participating in a school-wide performance, and having fun. Teachers observed that students improved communication and socialization skills, took risks, changed negative energy into positive energy, exercised self-control, and accepted individual strengths and weaknesses. The program was a resounding success and brought out the best in students in all participating exceptionalities.

The presenters will provide workshop participants with practical suggestions for implementing a similar program. Packets of material which include program goals and objectives as well as suggestions for locating an artist-in-residence and acquiring funding will be provided. The presenters are excited to share this innovative, "magical" means of learning and growing.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION:

We feel all students, regardless of label or exceptionality have special needs. They have difficulty expressing feelings in a positive way, controlling their emotions, feeling good about themselves, getting along with others or just accepting others' strengths and weaknesses. Through the Art of Dance we hope to instill the life qualities of discipline, dedication, perseverance and team work. By integrating students from each discipline (**ES-LS-GS**) in a common environment and experience we hope to change behavior and attitudes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This will be a two-part arts experience focusing on creative expression through dance and written and verbal expression.

We will be utilizing the expertise of a Dance Artist-in-residence for instruction and a school Guidance Counselor and/or Psychologist for sharing sessions.

Step #1...

All students from each discipline will be given a questionnaire to answer.

Step #2...

Four age appropriate groups will be formed based on teacher recommendations and student questionnaires. Approximately involve (32) interested students.

RESOURCES:

SOURCES FOR ACQUIRING FUNDING

Local Arts Councils
Universities/Colleges dance/theater dept.
County or State funded MINI-GRANTS
State funding-Arts in Special Education
Corporate sponsors

SOURCES FOR LOCATING DANCE TEACHER

Local Dance Companies/Studios
Local Arts Councils
State Arts Department
Universities/Colleges

PROJECTED COSTS:

Artist-in Residence
Cost: $1200.00.
Time: Approximately **12** school days plus optional time for rehearsal

Costumes/ Set Designs / Program: $300.00

This will include: 3-ply cardboard, material, decorative supplies, paints, shirts, ties, hats, etc., needed to create special effects.

TOTAL: $1500

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our global goal is to introduce Dance as a therapeutic means of creative expression. Through physical participation students from each discipline (GS-LS-ES) will have an opportunity to achieve any of the following goals:

-Improve Risk-Taking skills thorough participation
-Utilize dance movements as means of Creative Expression
-Build positive self-esteem
-Improve socialization skills
-Improve communication skills
-Become more aware and accepting of other's strengths and weaknesses
-Introduction to possible career choices
-Experience ways to turn negative energy into positive energy
-Exercise judgment and self-control
-Introduce possible career choices

Arts Education Goals:

-Create a safe a environment for freedom of expression
-Stimulate intellectual curiosity about the Art of Dance
-Stimulate sensitivity to and an appreciation of the Art of Dance
-Develop body awareness through creative movement
-Develop rhythm in movement patterns

MANAGING THE PROJECT

DANCE CLASS:

- *45 min. classes - 2 times a week - 6 wks. duration
- *Focus on various dance methods
- *Introduction of Dance as a means of expressing feelings, emotions, and everyday life situations (EX. sleep patterns)
- *Creating a Dance
- *Once "steps" have been created and a pattern emerges, set to music
- *Discussion and selection of music that fits the dance
- *Costumes may be added to enhance visual images and as another means of self-expression
- *Optional after school practice sessions will be offered

SHARING SESSION- (Will incorporate Guidance Dept. and/or Psychologist)

- ***30 min.** follow-up activity for each dance class
- ***ORAL** - encourage discussion to express feelings, analyze dance movements, peer relationships group interaction
- ***WRITTEN** - each student will be asked to keep a personal journal
  Teacher will prepare 2 questions for students to answer.
  Questions will be based on day's dance lesson

  Sample question: On costuming..
  1. Explain how your costume adds to your dance.
  2. Does the color or texture of your costume express any feelings? Explain.

TEACHER PARTICIPATION

Each participating teacher will be asked to observe and keep anecdotal notes on body language, student responses, participation, characteristics common to the group, and specific needs that may arise.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR/PSYCHOLOGIST

The services of the school guidance counselor and psychologist will be utilized. They will be asked to facilitate students in expressing their feelings. They will also help teachers interpret anecdotal notes and behavior.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY- Dance Repertoire Assembly

(Definition)- The stock of dances that a person or group is prepared to perform; the skills or accomplishments of a person or group.

The students will be asked to share their "Dances" with each other and the student body by performing at an assembly.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Do you ever have trouble expressing your feelings?

2. How do you usually express your feelings?

3. Which emotion do you have the most trouble expressing? (Circle Answers):
   FEAR ANGER LOVE HAPPINESS KINDNESS HATE

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS LIKING OTHERS LIKING MYSELF

4. Do you think Dance can be a way of expressing feelings?

5. Do you like physical activities?

6. Have you ever taken any gymnastics or dance lessons?

7. What kind of dance do you enjoy?

8. Would you be willing to learn more about different kinds of dance?

9. Would you be willing to take part in a dance class?

10. What is your favorite song?

11. Would you be willing to learn and perform a dance in front of a group?

TIME SCHEDULE of EVENTS: for 6 Weeks

TIME	ACTIVITY	STUDENTS
8:30 - 9:15 A.M.	Dance Class	Group #1 (Gr. 5)
9:15- 9:45 A.M.	Sharing Session	
10:00 -10:45 A.M.	Dance Class	Group #2 (Gr.6)
10:45 - 11:15 A.M.	Sharing Session	
LUNCH		
12:15 - 1:00 P.M.	Dance Class	Group #3 (Gr. 7)
1:00 -1:30 P.M.	Sharing Session	
1:30-2:15 P.M.	Dance Class	Group #4 (Gr. 8)
2:15 -2:45 P.M.	Sharing	
2:45 - 3:15	Meet, Discuss, Planning	Teachers
Optional:		
3:00 - 4:00	Practice Session	Open for those wanting to participate

PROJECT OPTIONS

***Optional Activities-**

_Use of computer and artistic talent to design a program
-Investigate possible career choices
-Research famous dancers
-Develop a time line of "The Evolution of Dance"
-Theatre Arts
-Puppetry, masks,
-Photography
-Set designing

Options for Expansion:

Students recommended by classroom teachers
Students recommended by counselors
Adult Class for teachers
CORE Group to other schools
CORE group working with Life Skills Classes

PUBLICITY:

The project should be widely publicized. The following are suggestions:

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER
PARENT GROUPS
LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
PUBLIC RELATIONS AD SPOTS ON RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS

MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT:

Measuring success or failure will be based on:

- -Teacher evaluation sheets
- -Student evaluation sheets
- -Teacher observations and anecdotal notes
- -Student journals
- -Evaluation of sharing sessions
- -Final presentations

By removing the labels of exceptionality and blending all students in a common environment and learning experience we have already achieved a primary goal. Further assessment can be made by observing the interaction of our students in a regular classroom situation.

Criteria of successful performance:

- -Students made progress in attaining global goal
- -Students made progress in attaining short-term goals
- -Students were able to interact regardless of exceptionality
- -Students were able to recognize and accept other's strengths and weaknesses
- -Students were able to channel negative energy in a positive way
- -Students enjoyed participating
- -Student evaluation of final dance
- -Teacher evaluation of final dance

-If we have helped even 1 child achieve personal success then this project, for us, has been successful.

-If we have helped remove the barriers of stereotyping children then we have been successful.

TEACHER EVALUATION:

-Compare and contrast common characteristics of students you observed.

-Who in your group demonstrated the best leadership skills?

-While observing the group did you hear any positive or negative comments?

-How did the students relate to each other?

-How effectively did the guest artist relate to the children?

-Was each child given the opportunity to participate during Sharing session?

-How did this activity meet the goals and objectives outlined in your student's IEP ?

-List any suggestions on how to improve or expand this activity.

-Would you consider this experience a success or a failure and why?

STUDENT EVALUATION:

1. How would you describe your participation in this Dance project?

2. Did you make any new friends during Dance class?

3. All kids are special. What makes you special?

4. Pick someone in your group. What makes this person special?

5. How did you use Dance to help you express your feelings?

6. Did the Sharing sessions help you in any way?

7. While participating in Dance and Sharing did you feel different from the other kids in any way?

8. Did you learn anything new about Dance ?

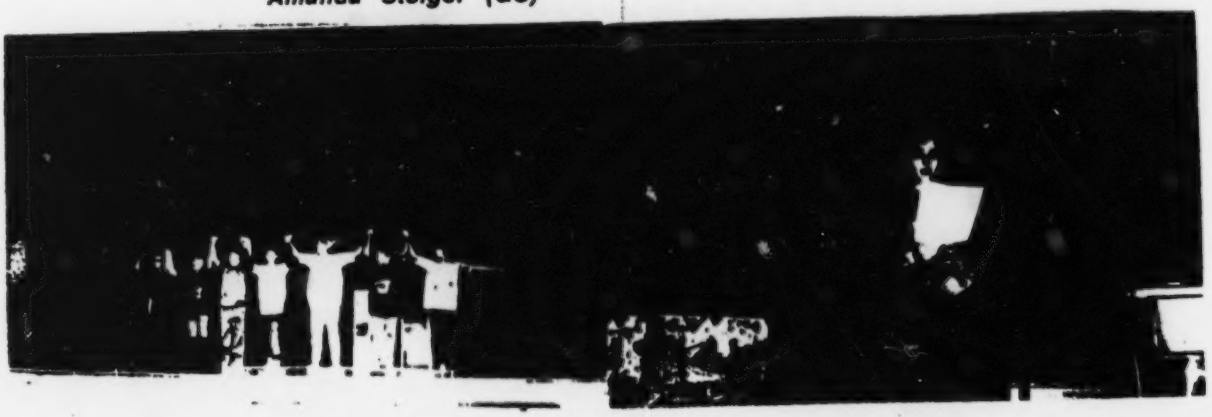
9. If you were the teacher what would you do to make this activity better?

10. Would you like to do this again next year?

Any Additional Comments:

NOTES

Cast involved in Dance Arts Day
"I even danced on a broken foot. After all, the show must go on."
Amanda Steiger (GS)



Their hard work paid off when they heard the applause.

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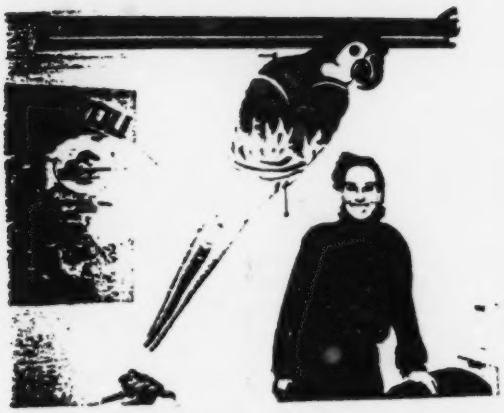
Dance Arts Day was a hit!!!

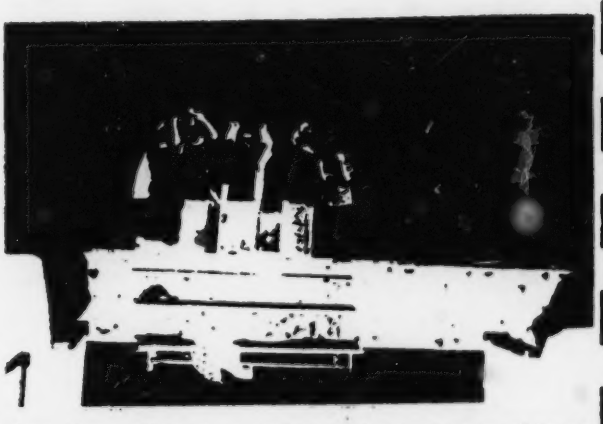


Artist-in-Residence, dancer and instructor,
Nina Wolf Ballstrere
"Creative Expression brings the best out in kids.
What fun we had !"

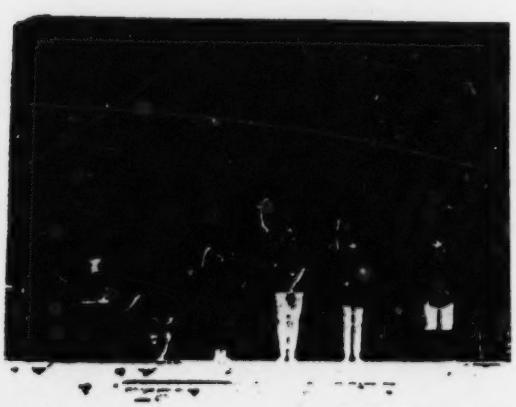
The sixth grade dancers; who start out fighting but end in harmony.
" When are we going to get to do this again?" ***Patrick Manning(LS)***

"I don't really care what the other kids think. I'm my own person."
Damian Moser (GS)

"Are we going to take this show on the road?"
Barry Kwinger (MR)



Fifth graders show different emotions as they pop out of boxes.
"I liked feeling special. I made new friends." ***Michelle Pay (ES***



Seventh grade dancers learn to cheer up with the help of a friend.
"At first my friends laughed at me until they saw the show. Then they wanted to do it too." ***Angel Rodriguez (LS)***

... And with grateful appreciation to Mr. Lyle Bliss, Twin Valley Middle School Principal, without whom this project would never have taken place. "I believe all of you are going to be pleasantly surprised. This is one of the finest assemblies I have ever seen."

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PANDORA'S BOX"

MUSIC: "THE LITTLE MERMAID" .....

In this enchanting number by our 5th graders, four emotions are expressed, one at a time. A s Barry, the locksmith, opens each box, a new dancer and different emotion is shown. In the first box we find a dancer of sadness, who will be followed by anger, fear, and joy.

GRADE 6

"ROCKY VI" .....

MUSIC: "DEEP FOREST"

In this hard hitting, action-packed number, the TVMS 6th grade boys come out fighting but slowly, the fighters realize that there are other ways to control anger and express emotions.

GRADE 7

"ANGEL OF HAPPINESS" .....

MUSIC: BARBARA STREISAND

When everyone is down, sad, and depressed who do you turn to? Our own "Angel!" The 7th grade dance students learn to cheer up with the help of a trusted friend by just "Being Alive!"

GRADE 8

"THE SLEEPER" .....

MUSIC: "9 INCH NAILS"

Damian, the sleeper, experiences an angry nightmare that would send anyone tossing and turning, but he wakes up to the sunlight of reality - and friends by his side.

SLIDE SHOW - Photo scrapbook of friends.

FINALE

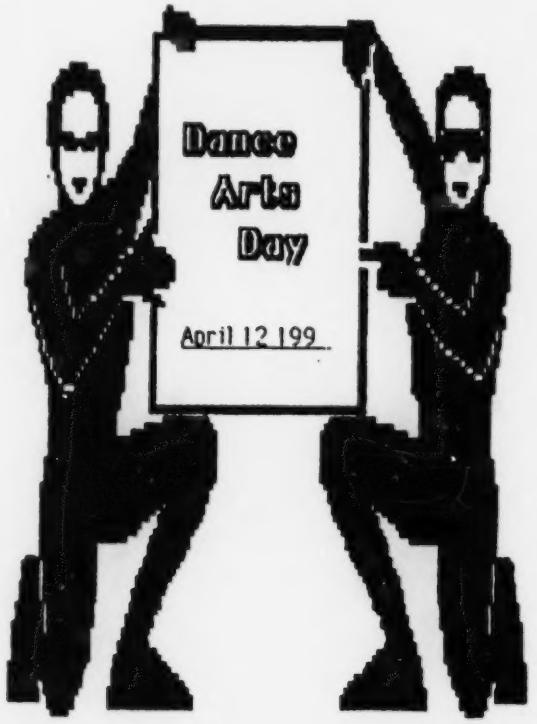
"A TRIBUTE TO SETH MCQUATE" .....

Twin Valley Middle School

and

Arts in Special Education Council of PA

Presents:



PROGRAM DESIGN : *Matt Perini*

LIGHTING AND SPECIAL EFFECTS : *Mr. Hamilton, Jason Flemming*